

12 July 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. William E. Colby

SUBJECT : Comments on the 12 July Management  
Committee Discussion

1. I have no desire to add to the burgeoning volume of disputatious paper on the NIO concept (in its various incarnations and under its various labels), nor will I belabor the central issues which we have already discussed and both understand. Some of the points raised in the frank and lengthy discussion at the 12 July Management Committee meeting, however, do merit brief comment.

2. Whether you want to go this route at all is a matter for you (alone) to decide. If you do, my own seven years of practical experience in the field has me absolutely, unshakably convinced that one idea which keeps being floated is a real world non-starter: that of assigning a "DCI Assistant's" role (whatever it be called) as an additional, part time responsibility to a serving officer or component head in some line unit. This is a real world loser on at least four counts:

a. "Special Assistant" duties for geographic or functional problem areas needing such an officer are a full time matter (and then some) if properly discharged.

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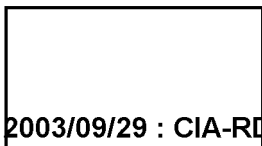
b. Given the nature of the human psyche, if (say) an OCI unit chief who happened to be the NIO for his area tried to task (say) a DDO Division, members of the latter would instinctively regard this as a request emanating from OCI, not a politely phrased instruction issued on the DCI's behalf. That may not be the way such things should be, but this is the way they would be in many, or most, instances.

c. Also -- again given the psyche of the human animal -- any such NIO would be placed in an impossible position vis-a-vis his superiors in his line component, especially if the latter were strong-minded exponents of tight control. Getting completely away from Agency personalities, try to envisage (say) a Colonel Bob Montague subordinate to a Lt. General DePuy trying to work (and function) part of the time as a direct representative of a General Westmoreland. No way.

d. For similar reasons, you are unlikely to get an ecumenical view from one who continues to draw his living from and perform the sacraments in one parish of a particular church. Parochialism is our (any) government's -- and Agency's -- most debilitating and ingrained vice. Your best chance of having assistants who look at problems through your eyes and from your perspective will come from (and only from) placing them, full time, in your office.

3. On Brownman's question -- even if you have Assistants/NIOs, do they need to be grouped in one office -- two points are relevant.

a. The need for some uniformity in output, which you flagged.



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b. The fact that for GS-1 or DCI, there are (regrettably) only 24 hours in a day, seven days in a week and 52 weeks in a year. There is some limit (which you alone can determine) to the number of people you can have directly reporting to you on a regular, continuing basis. If you have only one such Special Assistant, he obviously reports directly to you (else he is useless). If you have two (e.g., SEA and SALT) or three (e.g., SEA, SALT, the Middle East), you probably do not need an "office." In my opinion, however, if you have more than (say) five -- and certainly more than ten -- you do need a legate who, on a continuing basis, oversees the efforts of the whole panel on your behalf and is generally responsible to you for all of its members' activities, while you deal directly with given individual members whenever (but only when) your immediate needs or desires so dictate. This might be a trifle complicated, since the office chief obviously should never be a buffer between you and any given assistant, but at the same time there is a limit to the number of people whose activities you yourself can keep an eye on.

4. Nelson put his finger squarely on two important considerations, one of which I think he slightly misphrased but both of which should be frankly faced.

a. Though I would not second the label of "bastard compromise," the approach under consideration (as we discussed on 11 July) is an effort to eat cake and have it, in the sense that in key geographic or functional problem areas you would be trying to secure the benefits of geographic/functional integration without actually reorganizing the whole Agency. This is a neat trick but -- while admitting my probable bias -- I still think the Indochina experience shows that it can be done.

(1) Two other points are germane in this context. First, the Indochina experience also shows -- as Nelson also flagged -- the essentiality of the right mix of personal chemistry. This need will dictate (if this route be chosen) a very careful selection process, plus clear backing from you to keep to an irreducible minimum time-wasting and confusion-producing end run probes (there will be some, inevitably, as each Assistant/NIO works out his individual relationships with his line colleagues).

(2) One great merit to your approach as a circle squaring device is its flexibility. One of the many problems inherent in an integrated functional/geographic organizational structure is the fact that if problems or areas change in importance and/or new stresses arise in the real world (as they inevitably will), you cannot adapt your structure without undergoing the throes of yet another reorganization. Under the NIO/Assistant panel approach, you can give integration to the areas or problems that need it; but as needs change, it is (or would be) a relatively simple matter to alter the mix on the panel -- e.g., by dropping one or more Assistants and/or establishing one or more new ones, making a continual adjustment as the evolving real world's needs dictate.

b. Nelson is absolutely right in noting that if the Assistants/NIOs/whatever-you-call-them are able officers who do a significant job, they will accrete a considerable measure of personal clout -- despite the fact that, as staff

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officers, the authority they exercise would be entirely derivative (from you, in whose name they would speak) not directly delegated to or vested in them (as is the case with those holding positions of line command). This would perhaps be even more true of the head of the office, if you have an office. What Nelson is saying is that the establishment of such functions, or such an institution, would create a new force within the Agency and alter the present balance existing between and among current components and echelons. That is true; and while this is not necessarily an argument against such a move, it is a fact that should not be ignored.

5. This brings me, finally, to Ed Proctor's argument which, in essence, is that this move would be change (of a basic kind) and change is not needed. The former is indisputable, the latter is for you to decide.

George A. Carver, Jr.

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